

Policy for driving as part of official duties

April 2020

Information sheet

Information box

For further advice contact: Lead Officer: Health, safety and wellbeing (Glyn Coles)

Version control

Version	Author	Date of issue	Changes made
1.0	HR Lead Officer	July 2008	Original
1.1	HR Lead Officer	January 2009	Removal of internal references for internet
2.0	Lead Officer – health, safety and wellbeing	August 2013	Review date due & impact assessment carried out
3.0	Lead Officer – health, safety and wellbeing	October 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added in latest statistics relating to road safety• Included reference to Green Travel Plan and Lone Working Policy• Added extra tips and guidance on dealing with unanticipated incidents and added ‘road rage’• Updated ‘motorway breakdown’ to provide guidance on a breakdown on non-motorway roads and motorways with a converted hard shoulder• Added extra tips and guidance on driving on snow or ice• Added a section under ‘rain and fog’ about aquaplaning and flooded roads
4.0	Health, Safety, Employee Wellbeing and Engagement Group	April 2020	Scheduled review – minor updates.

Planned review date: April 2021

Any enquiries or comments regarding this policy should be addressed to:

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- A business rationale assessment has been carried out and this policy contributes to Estyn's strategic objectives and delivery principles.
- An equality impact assessment has been carried out and this policy is not deemed to adversely impact on any people on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This policy and its associated procedures are agreed by Estyn's management and Trades Unions

Contents

Section 1: Introduction	1
Organisational approach	1
Risk assessment	1
Section 2: Policy	2
Aim of the policy	2
Who is covered by this policy?	2
Section 3: Roles and responsibilities	3
Employees.....	3
Line managers.....	4
Training	4
Annex A	5
Section 1: Introduction	6
Section 2: Planning and preparation for a journey	7
Risk assessment	7
Safe driver	7
Safe vehicle	7
Planning for the journey.....	8
Section 3: Travelling safely	10
Whilst driving	10
Parking	10
Dealing with unanticipated incidents.....	10
Dealing with accidents.....	11
Section 4: Breakdown	13
Emergency telephones.....	13
Section 5: Special conditions and winter driving	15
Speed	15
Gears.....	15
Skidding.....	16
Rain and fog	16
Night driving.....	17
Section 6: Stress and driver fatigue	18
Adopting the best seating position.....	18
Reducing tension.....	18
Taking breaks	19
Section 7: Private vehicle weekly check	20
Section 8: Driving risk assessment checklist	21

Section 1: Introduction

Organisational approach

- 1.1 This policy sets out our approach to driving whilst on official business.
- 1.2 More than a quarter of all road traffic incidents may involve somebody who is driving as part of their work at the time¹. We are committed to protecting the health and safety of our employees and others affected by our work so far as is reasonably practicable and accept corporate responsibility for ensuring effective management arrangements to support this responsibility. This duty of care is embedded in our health and safety management arrangements and applies to work-related driving activities as to other work activities. This does not apply to people commuting (i.e. travelling between their home and their usual place of work), unless they are travelling from home to somewhere they do not usually work, for example, a homemaker travelling to the office.
- 1.3 In scheduling work activities and providing access to appropriate travel and subsistence (T&D) we will seek to minimise the amount individuals are required to travel.
- 1.4 Our [Major disruption to travel policy](#) sets out our duty of care to our employees commuting in the event of severe weather, other natural disasters, travel strikes or other major incidents.

Risk assessment

- 1.5 Risk assessment is a requirement under health and safety legislation and is fundamental to controlling risks to the health and safety of employees and others affected by an organisation's work activities.
- 1.6 The good practice guidelines attached to this policy provide information and a checklist to enable our employees to assess the risks of work related driving. Individuals should discuss any concerns they may have with their line managers who are expected to help the individual to address the concerns raised.

¹ Department for Transport statistics

Section 2: Policy

Aim of the policy

- 2.1 We recognise the need to take reasonable steps to ensure that those who drive during the course of their official duties do so in a manner which reduces the risk to themselves, and to any other person who could be affected. We aim to do this by communicating the roles and responsibilities detailed in this policy and providing appropriate training.
- 2.2 We expect those who work for us to:
- comply with all relevant legislation
 - act in accordance with this policy and associated good practice guidance on driving
 - accept the roles and responsibilities set out in Section 3
 - providing appropriate training

Who is covered by this policy?

- 2.3 This policy and the associated guidelines apply to all permanent employees, secondees and temporary agency workers.
- 2.4 It is essential that this policy document is covered within the induction process for all new members of staff and that the key messages are regularly communicated to staff.

Section 3: Roles and responsibilities

Employees

3.1 All employees are responsible for:

- Complying with all traffic and related road safety laws whilst driving on official duties, including the Highway Code. We will not accept responsibility for breaches of traffic or road safety law by employees, and such breaches *could* result in disciplinary action under Estyn's [Discipline Policy](#) (depending on the seriousness of the breach).
- Considering their own and other road users' safety.
- Payment of any motoring-related penalties or fines and, if using a hire car, for the payment of any administration charges related to traffic offences imposed by the hire company.
- Ensuring that they have a valid driving licence, appropriate insurance as set out in the [Travel and Subsistence Policy](#), and a valid MOT if appropriate, and producing proof of all of this as required by Estyn.
- Only using a vehicle for official duties that is in a roadworthy condition and declining to drive any vehicle hired for use on official duty if they have reason to suspect that it is not roadworthy.
- Reporting to their line manager any driving accidents, incidents and near misses that happen whilst driving on official duties, any convictions for driving offences, including having their licence removed for any reason. Such steps will enable managers to take a view about the risks associated with driving, the possible impact on Estyn, any training needs, the individual's capacity to undertake the full range of official duties, and the possible need for disciplinary action. Failure to make the required reports could result in disciplinary action.
- Reporting any accidents or incidents (near misses) to the Lead Officer for Health, Safety and Wellbeing (Glyn Coles) either directly or via their line manager so that it can be officially recorded in Estyn's accident book or incident log.
- Ensuring that they do not attempt to drive unless they are fit to do so, and informing line managers immediately of any medical condition that prevents them from driving (see [DVLA – Check if a health condition affects your driving for further information](#)). Employees must not drive whilst under the influence of alcohol or any other substance (including some prescription drugs) likely to impair or adversely affect their ability to drive safely. If in doubt, individuals should ask their GP.
- Satisfying themselves that they meet the eyesight requirements of the Highway Code. If in doubt they should arrange an eye test, the cost of which may be reimbursed by Estyn under Estyn's Eye Scheme, details of which are on [SharePoint](#)

- Not smoking (including e-cigarettes) in any vehicle (private or hired) which is being used for official business (in line with [Estyn's Policy and Guidance for Managing Stress and Wellbeing in the Workplace](#)) where more than one person is travelling.
- Following the [ICT usage policy](#) and legislation prohibiting the use of mobile phones whilst driving unless a hands free kit is fitted, and then only if strictly necessary as using a hands-free phone can seriously affect concentration.
- Ensuring that they are familiar with the controls of any hire car or unfamiliar vehicle they are going to drive and that they have made the necessary adjustments to their seating position, head restraint and mirrors.
- Following the process set out in the associated guidelines to risk assess their journeys and in the event that any issues arise, discussing and resolving those concerns with line managers before that journey.
- Participating in a timely manner in driver development training which has been identified and offered.

Line managers

3.2 In addition to the responsibilities detailed above, line managers are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that their direct reports are aware of this policy and its associated guidelines.
- Dealing with reports of any driving accidents, incidents (near misses), and convictions for any driving offences, and taking a view about the risks associated with driving, and the possible impact on Estyn. This might include considering whether the incident highlights a training need.
- Dealing with any driving-related concerns raised by individuals, including issues related to managing workloads, driving fatigue and fitness to drive. This might include considering options such as sharing driving, overnight stays or the scope for rescheduling appointments.
- Ensuring they liaise / consult with the Lead Officer for Health, Safety and Wellbeing or the Human Resources team as appropriate on issues relating to safe driving.

Training

3.3 Where employees drive regularly in order to undertake their official duties, we will offer non-compulsory driver development training every three years. The training will be provided as soon as possible once the need to drive regularly has been identified and, in any event, no later than six months after such a need has been identified. Refresher training may be provided for individuals where a particular need is identified.

Annex A

Driving as part of official duties: Good practice guidelines

Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 These good practice guidelines complement our driving policy. The guidelines provide information to enable employees to assess the risks of work related driving, which is a requirement under health and safety legislation, and offer advice about good practice when driving, in line with the driver development training which staff who drive regularly on official business may already have received. Following the guidelines will help to manage and reduce the risks of work related driving.
- 1.2 The guidelines also aim to increase awareness of environmental issues, reflecting our commitment to reducing the adverse impact on the environment caused by our operations, particularly through the consumption of energy, use of transport and carbon monoxide emissions.
- 1.3 In 2017, 58%² of domestic transport greenhouse gas emissions were from cars and taxis and contributes to local air pollution and congestions. Our [Green Travel Plan](#) encourages employees to use more sustainable modes of travel. The type of car you drive, the way you drive and the fuel you use can have a big impact on the emissions produced:
 - regular maintenance of vehicles, particularly servicing and tuning in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations, helps to reduce emissions, improve efficiency and can also save money
 - the steering on vehicles can, over time, become misaligned. This can lead to significant tyre wear and tear and will increase fuel consumption. One degree of misalignment can increase fuel consumption by 3%
 - under inflated tyres increase fuel consumption and operating costs, whilst over inflated tyres have a shorter life and can be dangerous
- 1.4 Drivers can reduce emissions by following the driving tips below:
 - driving smoothly – checking the road ahead and avoiding harsh acceleration and braking
 - shifting to a higher gear at the right time – change up at 2,500 rpm for petrol cars and 2,000 rpm for diesel cars
 - switching off the engine if you won't be moving for a while (many new cars do this automatically)
 - using air conditioning and other on-board electrical devices only when necessary as they increase fuel consumption
 - reducing unnecessary weight from your car, such as removing a roof rack

² [Transport Statistics Great Britain 2017 \(Department for Transport\)](#)

Section 2: Planning and preparation for a journey

Risk assessment

- 2.1 Before setting out on a journey, drivers should assess any risks, following these guidelines and using the suggested checklist at Section 8 (**although it is not necessary to document the assessment formally for each journey**). Risk assessments will help to identify possible or expected hazards, which are likely to be encountered during the journey. Hazards could include the condition of the vehicle, weather conditions and the suitability of roads, particularly non-main roads, also any medical conditions of the driver or passengers.
- 2.2 In summary, drivers should satisfy themselves of three key things:
- that they are fit to drive
 - that the vehicle is safe to drive
 - that they know the route to the destination, have allowed sufficient time for the journey given road and weather conditions, speed limits and the need for breaks, as appropriate, to ensure their safety

Safe driver

- 2.3 It is the drivers' responsibility to ensure that they are capable of safely completing the journey ahead of them.
- 2.4 In order to ensure that they are fit to drive, those covered by this policy should:
- ensure that they meet in full their responsibilities as set out in Section 3 of the policy, including having a valid driving licence and appropriate insurance
 - not drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol
 - not drive if they are taking medication which contra indicates driving, as to do so could put themselves or others at risk
 - have received or arranged for appropriate training or instruction to help them drive safely in the case of those who drive regularly on Estyn's business
 - ensure they are not emotionally upset or psychologically diverted in something else and can give the road full attention
 - conduct a risk assessment, following Section 8 of these guidelines

Safe vehicle

- 2.5 When using a private car to undertake an official journey it is the driver's responsibility to ensure that the vehicle used is maintained and serviced regularly,

has the necessary insurance as set out in the [Travel and Subsistence Policy](#) and has a valid MOT certificate, if required.

2.6 To help ensure your private vehicle is as safe as it can be, Section 7 gives a weekly safety checklist. In addition to the weekly checks, drivers should also carry out a maintenance check of their vehicle before starting a journey. This should include:

- cleaning the windscreen inside and out
- ensuring wing mirrors are clean
- looking for signs of wear on the windscreen wiper blades and replace as necessary
- checking that lights and indicators are working
- checking tyres for sharp objects, worn tread and sufficient pressure
- checking fluid levels, include the oil
- checking water levels and windscreen wash bottle (and anti-freeze during the winter)
- ensuring sufficient fuel for the journey
- ensuring that the seat, seat belt and mirrors are adjusted properly and that the head restraint is adjusted to support the head properly

2.7 When using a hire car, the driver should follow the procedures to arrange the hire car set out in the [Travel and Subsistence Policy](#) (or any notice which subsequently supersedes this). In addition drivers should:

- undertake a visual check of the vehicle before starting the journey to satisfy themselves of its suitability
- familiarise themselves with the controls and make necessary adjustments to the seat, head restraint and mirrors
- raise any concerns about the car promptly with the car hire company
- keep the hire car pack close to hand

Planning for the journey

2.8 When planning a journey, drivers should consider the most appropriate mode of travel, given the length of the journey, timing and work commitments of the day.

2.9 If in doubt about whether their travel arrangements are suitable, drivers should discuss with their line manager their plans, including consideration of whether an overnight stay is appropriate. The [Travel and Subsistence Policy](#) provides detailed guidance on such matters, including on how much travel should be undertaken before or after a working day before employees should consider whether it would be

more appropriate to stay overnight. The policy also explains the mileage threshold which determines when hire cars should be used.

2.10 Before starting the journey, drivers should:

- plan the journey in advance to take account of the time and type of driving, road and weather conditions, and the need for regular rest breaks
- think about using main or well used roads whenever possible
- ensure that their line manager/ other colleagues / family know the destination, estimated time of arrival and planned route, and keep them informed of progress if appropriate
- ensure that their contact details are up to date on Sharepoint.
fully charge their work mobile phone before setting off - an emergency 999 call can almost invariably be made even if there appears to be no signal
- ensure they have their personal attack alarm with them, if they have one, ensure they know how to use it, and that it is kept to hand
- ensure that they are as comfortable as possible, with all necessary adjustments made to the seat, head restraint, mirrors etc
- check the interior of the car to ensure no-one has entered it before setting off

2.11 When travelling longer distances drivers should also consider having the following items in their vehicle:

- all necessary contact details, including details of car recovery agents and car hire company where appropriate
- driving licence and insurance details
- a supply of small change, and work mobile phone (fully charged)
- the RAC and first aid kit provided by Estyn – which is best kept in the car, not in the boot, although it should not be placed on the passenger seat, as items in full view could be attractive to thieves and could be snatched whilst the car is stopped, e.g. at traffic lights
- a hands-free sat nav (or similar device) or an up-to-date road atlas / street map and / or directions to the destination
- a light snack and drink in case they are held up in traffic or stranded due to bad weather
- a travel rug, umbrella, torch, a pair of wellington boots, additional clothing, spade, and flask of warm drink if travelling in poor weather/snow
- pen and paper

Section 3: Travelling safely

Our [policy on lone working](#) should also be consulted when driving alone.

Whilst driving

- 3.1 As well as complying with all relevant legal requirements and speed limits, drivers should:
- drive safely, taking account of weather conditions
 - maintain concentration and alertness; avoid distractions, including eating or drinking
 - maintain a comfortable posture
 - never give lifts to strangers

Parking

- 3.2 When parking their car, drivers should:
- aim to park in well-lit areas. If parking in daylight, consider what the area will be like in the dark
 - try to find a space near the pedestrian exit in a multi storey car park
 - always lock their car when it is being left and ensure that all possessions are secured out of sight. When returning, enter the car swiftly after checking that no-one has got into it while it was parked

Dealing with unanticipated incidents

- 3.3 Following the advice in these good practice guidelines should minimise the likelihood of unanticipated events happening. However, if something unexpected does occur, the following advice may help:
- If your car starts to malfunction, stop in a well-lit or well used area, and if you are a member of a recovery organisation, phone them. Otherwise, let a colleague know of your whereabouts and contact the nearest garage to make appropriate arrangements. If using a hire car, follow the procedures set out in the car hire pack.
 - If you see someone in difficulty, an accident, someone tries to flag you down or another incident, consider whether you can help, taking account of the possibility of putting yourself at risk or whether it is safer or more appropriate to report it to the police by phone or at the nearest police station. In this case, gesture to the other party involved to acknowledge that you are aware of their need for help and that you will phone to let someone know. If possible note down details such as the vehicle registration number to pass to the police.

- If someone pulls up alongside you while you are driving, and tries to attract your attention, ignore them and don't make eye contact. Let them pass.
- If you think you are being followed or tailgated, keep calm and, where it is safe to do so, pull into the left-hand lane and slow down. Try and find a safe opportunity for that driver to pass. Circumnavigating a roundabout to enable a tailgater to get past you will add little time to your journey but can make a significant difference to stress levels. Don't make eye contact. If they persist, make sure all your windows are closed and doors locked, and drive to a busy, well-lit public place, a police station, garage forecourt or similar place and remain in the car. This will allow you to make a phone call if necessary and should deter any potential pursuer.
- If you are forced to stop, try to keep your engine running. Under no circumstances should you endanger your safety or well-being by getting out of the car to deal with an angry or aggressive driver. If confronted with a road rage situation remain in the car with the windows closed and door locked. If necessary, call for help on a mobile phone (not while driving). If the driver leaves the car and approaches you, check that there is enough space behind to reverse into and accelerate away, sounding your horn and activating your hazard lights.
- If another driver makes an error, displays bad driving or behaviour, try to stay away from them and concentrate on driving well and within the law. Avoid getting into a conflict with another driver - stay calm and think logically. Do not engage in gestures, such as flashing headlights or sounding the horn as this will serve no purpose and may exacerbate the situation and also distract you. However, if you accidentally cause another driver to become angry – hold up your whole hand as a friendly acknowledgement of your mistake – this can diffuse the situation.

Dealing with accidents

- 3.4 If you are involved in a crash, which causes injury to another person not in your vehicle, or an animal; or causes damage to another vehicle or roadside property; you should take the following actions:
- Stop and exchange details (driver and vehicle owner's name(s) and address, vehicle registration number(s) and names(s) or their insurers) with any third party involved. This is a legal requirement. If in a hire car, follow the procedures set out in the car hire pack.
 - Inform the police as soon as is reasonably practicable, and in any case within 24 hours, of the accident, if somebody or an animal is injured or if the third party does not exchange details.
 - Obtain the names and addresses of independent witnesses, if any.
 - Make a note with a sketch of the accident location, position of vehicles involved, road signs, measurements etc.

Policy for driving as part of official duties

- Inform your line manager or in their absence another colleague. If arrangements need to be made for your safe return home, these may be discussed with your manager.
- Report the accident to the Lead Officer for Health, Safety and Wellbeing (Glyn Coles) or record it in the Accident Book as soon as possible.

Section 4: Breakdown

- 4.1 In the event of a breakdown on a motorway, do not attempt to repair the car as this can be hazardous. Inform the motorway police as soon as is practicable and adopt the following procedures:
- Pull over to the hard shoulder as far to the left as possible with your wheels turned to the left. After you have made contact with the emergency services or breakdown recovery, phone or text your line manager or colleague to let them know of the circumstances. (You should not use the hard shoulder for non-emergency reasons such as to use a mobile phone). You need not stop straight away as often you will be able to coast for quite a distance.
 - Use your hazard lights, and if visibility is poor, your sidelights as well.
 - Place your warning triangle (in the RAC kit) on the hard shoulder 150 yards behind the car.
 - If you breakdown on a non-motorway road, move your vehicle off the road if you can, but watch out for soft verges that could make it tricky to get going again. Put your hazard lights on; if it's dark or foggy, keep your sidelights on too. It's usually safer to wait well away from your vehicle and moving traffic, behind a suitable barrier if you can. If you get out, take care and use the doors facing away from passing traffic. Wear a reflective jacket if you have one. If it's safe to do so, put a warning triangle at least 45m (50 yards) behind your vehicle. Don't stand between your vehicle and oncoming traffic.

Emergency telephones

- 4.2 If you need to use one of the emergency telephones:
- Aim to reach one of the emergency telephones which will help the police to pinpoint your position exactly. Calls are free and you will be put directly in touch with motorway control. Inside the box you will find a list of all the information you will need to give motorway control. If you are a woman travelling alone tell them, and your call will be given priority. You will need to inform them of your name and address; make and model of your car; year of manufacture; registration number; nature of the fault; brief details of the carriageway and marker post location; your membership number if you belong to one of the motoring organisations; and the name of a specific garage that you require to provide help.
 - If you cannot stop right next to the telephone, look for one of the marker posts, which will show you the direction to the nearest one. The telephones are only a mile apart, so you will never have to walk more than half a mile.
 - Whilst using one of the emergency phones, stand behind it facing the oncoming traffic, this will enable you to see if anyone is approaching.

- Never reverse on the hard shoulder or cross the carriageways. Telephones are always opposite each other. If they are out of order, whenever possible, extra police cars will be sent to patrol the motorway.

4.3 When leaving the car to use an emergency phone you should:

- Exit via the passenger door, leaving it wide open (unless you are leaving the car a distance from a telephone) so that you can get back into the car quickly if necessary.
- Lock all other doors and close the windows.
- Move up the bank or stand behind the barrier. Do not wait inside the car. Assaults on people on the motorway, are extremely rare. If someone pulls up (other than the emergency services), quickly return to your car, lock yourself in and let the person know that help is on the way.
- If someone pulls up while you are still on the telephone, give the police a brief description of the person and the make and registration number of their car. Then return to your car and lock yourself in.
- Get into the car when the repair van arrives and leave the window open just wide enough to call out and check the identification of the mechanic and that they know your name
- If you have a disability which prevents you from following the above advice, keep your seatbelt on, switch on your hazard warning lights and use a mobile phone, if you have one, to call the emergency services.
- If you can't get to the hard shoulder, stay in your vehicle unless you can be absolutely sure it's safe to leave it. Put your hazard lights on, keep your seatbelt on and call the emergency services.
- If you are on a motorway where the hard shoulder has been converted into a traffic lane, use the emergency refuge area, motorway service area or leave at the next junction. If this isn't possible, try to get the vehicle off the carriageway. If you have to stop in a traffic lane, activate your hazard lights. If you are able to, follow the guidance above.
- If you are able to resume your journey onto a motorway, make sure you build up speed first on the hard shoulder and watch for a safe gap in the traffic.

Section 5: Special conditions and winter driving

- 5.1 Special driving conditions call for special care and additional safety precautions and consideration should be given when planning journeys to the possible impact of severe weather conditions and whether the journey can be avoided. However, driving in poor winter conditions need not be daunting as long as you and the car are properly prepared. The following tips are intended to help you negotiate special driving conditions safely.
- 5.2 It is the drivers' responsibility to check the vehicle condition (Section 2 and the checklist at Section 7), paying particular attention to keeping windscreens and windows clear.

Speed

- 5.3 When driving in difficult conditions:
- reduce your speed and don't be hurried by others into faster driving
 - keep well back from the vehicle in front; conditions like snow, ice, heavy rain, wet leaves on the road surface and fog mean that more time and distance are needed to pull up safely or steer around a potential accident
 - look out for possible hazards, e.g. black ice which is usually indicated by a feeling of 'lightness' in the steering
 - accelerate and brake slowly, taking special care on bends

Gears

- 5.4 When driving on snow or ice:
- stay in the highest gear possible, for the best traction
 - keep the car moving on hills as it is important to maintain momentum
 - try to keep your speed constant but, to avoid wheel spin, do not accelerate too much
 - slow down in plenty of time on bends and corners
 - select a lower gear when going downhill and keep your speed down; if possible, do not use the accelerator or brakes, and if you do need to brake, do so before your speed picks up
 - if you need to brake, get into a lower gear than normal, allow your speed to fall and use your brakes gently
 - increase the gap between you and the vehicle in front; you may need up to ten times the normal distance for braking

- keep your vehicle well-ventilated; the car heater turned up full can quickly make you drowsy

Skidding

- 5.5 Skidding is caused by excessive speed, mis-judgement in steering, over-acceleration, or sudden braking.
- 5.6 It is important to handle skids appropriately - the following table provides some guidance in relation to this.

Type of skid	Usual causes	Control actions
Front wheel skid: The car continues in a straight line instead of following the direction of the front wheels.	Excessive speed at a corner	Remove pressure from the accelerator and at the same time straighten the front wheels.
Rear wheel skid	Excessive speed, mis-judgement in steering or over-acceleration	Remove pressure on the accelerator and at the same time turn the front wheels into the skid, i.e. if the back of the car swings to the right, steer the car to the right (or vice versa) but do not prolong the action longer than is required to correct the skid or you may develop another skid in the opposite direction
Four wheel skid	Sudden braking	Lightly pump the brake pedals on and off as quickly as you can. This will keep the wheels moving so you can steer out of trouble. If your car has anti-lock brakes it will carry out this action for you

Rain and fog

- 5.7 Rain reduces your ability to see and greatly increases the distance required to slow down and stop. Remember that you will need about **twice** your normal braking distance. When driving in rain and / or fog:
- reduce speed

- use dipped headlights to reduce glare
- increase the distance between you and the vehicle in front

Aquaplaning

5.8 Aquaplaning is caused by driving too fast into surface water. When the tyre tread cannot channel away enough water, the tyre(s) lose contact with the road and your car will float on a wedge of water. Aquaplaning can be avoided by reducing speed in wet conditions. Having the correct tyre pressure and tyre tread depth will maximise your tyres' ability to maintain their road grip. If it happens, ease off the accelerator and brakes until your speed drops sufficiently for the car tyres to make contact with the road again.

Flooded roads

5.9 Avoid the deepest water – which is usually near the kerb. Don't attempt to cross if the water seems too deep. If you are not sure of the water's depth, look for an alternative route. If you decide to risk it, drive slowly in first gear but keep the engine speed high by slipping the clutch – this will stop you from stalling. Be aware of the bow wave from approaching vehicles – operate an informal 'give way' with approaching vehicles. Remember to test your brakes when you are through the flood.

Night driving

5.10 When driving at night:

- keep headlights and the windscreen clean
- dip your headlights if there is a vehicle in front of you or approaching you from the other direction
- increase the distance between you and the vehicle in front
- avoid looking into oncoming headlights

Section 6: Stress and driver fatigue

- 6.1 Stress and fatigue may result in loss of concentration and impair driving ability thereby compromising the safety of employees and others. This is especially so in poor driving conditions (e.g. adverse weather) or if driving late at night.
- 6.2 Line managers will support individual employees in considering ways to minimise stress related to business activities. They will support employees to manage business activities and plan journeys to minimise the risk of fatigue. However, it is drivers' responsibility to plan their journeys appropriately (see Section 2.8-2.11) and discuss any particular concerns with their line managers.
- 6.3 Individual staff can help to manage and minimise any stress and physical discomfort caused by driving by:
 - adopting the best seating position
 - taking steps to reduce tension
 - taking regular breaks from driving; a break of 15 minutes is recommended after 2 hours' continuous driving

Adopting the best seating position

- 6.4 Before setting off on a journey:
 - Take the time to position yourself correctly in the car. Make sure the car seat provides support for the small of your back. A lumbar roll can provide additional support – this is for individuals to judge, and provide if they consider it is helpful
 - Adjust the seat so that you can reach the pedals and steering wheel without stretching. The knees should be slightly bent and the thighs supported by the seat cushion
 - Ensure the seat belt goes comfortably across the body
 - Keep your hands a comfortable distance apart on the steering wheel and your arms slightly bent
 - Adjust the interior and exterior mirrors every time you enter the car to provide the best possible backward views (gravity compresses the spine by up to three quarters of an inch during the day)

Reducing tension

- 6.5 Reducing the tensions of driving can be achieved by following simple exercises when stopped at traffic lights or in a traffic jam:
 - Tuck in your chin and stretch your neck to make it longer, then relax. Repeat two or three times

- Turn the head slowly to one side as far as possible, then turn to the other side. Repeat two or three times
- Hunch your shoulders towards your ears and relax. Repeat as above
- Tighten your stomach muscles at frequent intervals. This helps support the internal organs and promotes good posture
- Ensure you have a supply of fresh air into the car

Taking breaks

6.6 Tiredness can impair reaction time, alertness, concentration and decision making. Sleep related road traffic incidents are most likely between 2pm and 4pm³. To minimise the risks ensure you take a break after two hours driving, or more frequently, if necessary. It is important to recognise when you need to stop, and get out to stretch your legs and let fresh air into your lungs. Take a short walk to help your circulation and generally wake yourself up.

³ [Driving at work, HSE](#)

Section 7: Private vehicle weekly check

Drivers should ensure that any car used for business travel is maintained in good working order and serviced regularly. The following form is intended to help drivers to routinely check their cars and where necessary, take appropriate action. A weekly check is recommended to identify issues and ensure that where necessary, they are addressed promptly in order to reduce the risks of breakdown and / or accidents. However, **the form need not be completed each week.**

Vehicle checks	Action needed / comments
Tyres - pressure and tread (particularly for non-symmetrical wear which may indicate steering misalignment)	
Lights (front, rear, brake, full beam and reversing)	
Indicators	
Windscreen/windows	
Washers and wipers	
All fluid levels	
Mirrors including the internal mirror	
Oil / coolant / battery levels	
Seating position	
Hand brake	
Gear operation	
Warning lights	
First aid box / torch / reflective clothing	
Wintertime or adverse weather: wet weather clothing, blanket	

Remember...

Regular maintenance of vehicles, servicing and tuning, correct wheel alignment and tyre pressures help to reduce emissions, improve efficiency and safety and can also save money.

Section 8: Driving risk assessment checklist

Drivers are responsible for assessing the risks for their journeys before they set out and ensuring that risks are managed and controlled. They should discuss and resolve any issues with their line manager before starting the journey. This checklist is intended to help drivers assess the risks associated with driving on official duties, although it is not exhaustive. **Staff may find it helpful to complete the form as a reminder of the hazards and the controls needed to reduce and manage the risks but it is not necessary to document the assessment for each journey.**

Issue/check	Action needed / comments
Fitness to drive	
I am fit to drive and have discussed with my line manager any medical conditions or cause for concern; also I am satisfied as to the fitness of any passengers in the vehicle	
I have a full driving licence and appropriate insurance for the journey	
I am not under the influence of drugs / alcohol or taking any medication that contra-indicates driving	
I comply with Estyn's Driving Policy and am familiar with the associated guidelines	
I am satisfied that I meet the eyesight requirements of the Highway Code	
I am familiar with Estyn's mobile phone policy and comply with the legal restrictions on the use of mobile phones whilst driving	
I have received driver development training or arrangements are being made	
Safe car	
I am satisfied that the vehicle is safe to drive, maintained in good order, is routinely checked and has a valid MOT certificate (if required)	
The RAC and first aid kit provided by Estyn are in the car and accessible	
I am familiar with all the controls	
I have made all the necessary adjustments as appropriate to the seat, seat belt, head restraint, mirrors etc	
Planning of the journey	
I have all the necessary address and contact details, have planned the route and times of travel and am aware of any known route hazards, potential black spots, diversions or hold ups	
I have the necessary documents (driving licence, insurance details etc) in the vehicle	

Policy for driving as part of official duties

I have allowed sufficient time for the journey taking account of known hazards and allowing for rest breaks as appropriate	
I have discussed the arrangements for travel with my line manager and considered options for car sharing and overnight stays where appropriate	
I have charged my mobile phone, have emergency contact numbers and colleagues are aware of my journey plans	
I have checked on the road and weather conditions and, if severe weather is likely to cause particularly hazardous driving conditions, have discussed with my line manager whether the journey is necessary or whether alternative arrangements could be made.	
I have considered the need for additional clothing or equipment to suit particular weather conditions	